

NEWS

Atlanta Hyatt 'Perks' up hotel with coffee store concept

by Jack Hayes

ATLANTA — Hyatt Regency Atlanta, the southern division flagship of Chicago-based Hyatt Hotels Corp., is testing a 24-hour gourmet-coffee-and-food-store concept called Perks.

Featuring coffees, bottled waters and sandwiches on a menu of 100 prepared and packaged food items, the successful test unit is grossing \$60,000 a month in just 600 square feet of lobby space.

"I think we've got the perfect concept for a convention hotel like ours, which draws a large, steady flow of foot traffic," said Ed Bucholtz, the Atlanta unit's food and beverage director.

With some likeness to Saratoga Pantry, the convenience store-coffee shop concept operating at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Perks is also similar to the high-grossing Gourmet Shop, a luxury coffee-and-prepared-foods-to-go concept that debuted at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co.'s Amelia Island Resort last year and is being introduced at a number of the hotel chain's new properties.

Steven Schaefer, executive chef and food and beverage director at the Amelia Island unit, said demand for upscale takeout meals and snacks is continuing to drive sales at the Gourmet Shop.

"Any time you create a concept and the numbers are still open a year later, you have to believe you're onto a trend," Schaefer said of the 300-



Conventioner Diana Wellings, left, purchases a cup of coffee from staffer Merita Mejia at Perks in Atlanta's Hyatt hotel.

square-foot unit, which sells coffee and bottled beverages, takeout meals and snacks, and gourmet food products from north Florida's coastal region.

Bucholtz said the key convention hotels in Hyatt's 22-unit southern division, extending from San Diego to Charlotte, N.C., are watching the Perks test closely.

"The two top sellers are coffee and bottled water," Bucholtz said, adding that coffee by itself is generating 35 percent to 60 percent of total sales. "There's a coffee craze going on."

Sales are about equal for the remaining prepared foods and convenience items, which include sandwiches, pastries, ice creams, cookies, candies and dried fruits by the ounce.

Bucholtz said.

He also noted that the 24-hour Perks is serving a late-night crowd between 1:30 a.m. and 4 a.m. Early-morning travelers who leave before traditional coffee shops open also are frequenting the new shop.

"It isn't eroding room-service business, nor is it taking sales from our other restaurants or the hotel gift shop," Bucholtz said.

The 1,265-room Hyatt Regency Atlanta operates three dining venues in addition to Perks: the "blue-domed" rooftop restaurant Polaris, featuring both dinner and cocktails; the Italian-themed Avanzare, which offers lunch and dinner; and a three-meal coffee shop and buffet concept, Cafe Kobenhaven, also operating in the hotel lobby.

Murray's celebrates 50th with promos

MINNEAPOLIS — Murray's, one of downtown's oldest restaurants, known for its steaks since 1946, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year with a series of promotions.

All year long, customers who will turn 50 in 1996 and who want to celebrate their birthday with a dinner party of four or more will receive a complimentary bottle of wine, cake and a box of Murray's famous garlic toast to take home.

Mothers who dine at Murray's on Mother's Day, May 12, will receive a "Skinny Beef Recipe" book, compliments of the Minnesota Beef Council, and chances to win a day at a local spa.

On Father's Day, June 16, customers who are dads have chances to win a package of New York strip steaks they can later barbecue at home.

Customers celebrating

their 50th wedding anniversary are invited to reserve spots at a special buffet to be held June 23. A local judge will provide over a renewal of marriage vows.

Flashback. Nostalgia Night will be held July 13 with a rumpong room sing-along, dancing and a special menu.

Additional promotions are in the planning stages for the remainder of the year.

MARKETING

Benihana's new campaign: A slice of theater

(Continued from page 16)
tal restaurant chain in the country."

The 60-second radio spot features various Benihana chefs who are so talented as exhibition cooks that they aspire to become actors. After struggling to perform in plays like "Hamlet," they eventually learn to what they do best — cooking.

The 30-second television spots emphasize the social aspect of dining at Benihana.

One ad, which is shot in fast-moving frames, features a chef chopping vegetables and flipping shrimp at a rapid pace. In another spot eight diners interact with each other and the chef around the table.

"Benihana is a very social restaurant," Homann said. "All the tables accommodate eight people, so many times strangers interact. When you go to Benihana, you are not getting a

lonely table for two."

Schwartz said the campaign is aimed at generating repeat business as well as attracting new customers.

"We want to bring the Benihana name to a different audience," he said. "There are some people who don't know about us. The ads show that Benihana is a place the entire family can come to and have a good time — a place they will see the chef perform and flip shrimp."

Accommodation by the Book — An Excerpt

Signs that point to your accommodating style



Table tents, wall plaques, counter signs, and door decals—FREE signage that lets non-smokers and smokers alike know you accommodate them.

More suggestions for accommodating your customers can be found in

The Accommodation Program restaurant Source Book.

Receive it FREE along with a catalog for other FREE materials when you participate in

The Accommodation Program.

Look for the reply card in this

publication or call

1-800-929-1414.



The Accommodation Program®
Courtesy of Philip Morris Incorporated

